

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01

EB-07 AID-05 EUR-12 OPIC-03 COME-00 SY-05 TRSE-00

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R 101448Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2195

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, EC

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT ADDRESSES RECENT SPATE OF "TERROR-
IST" INCIDENTS IN NOV. 5 PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: A) QUITO 7805 B) QUITO 7185 C) QUITO 6058

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT JARRIN DENIED NOV. 5 LEFT-WING CHARGES THAT GOE WAS IN SOME WAY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ONE OF A SPATE OF RECENT BOMBINGS, ASSAULTS, AND ILLEGAL CONFISCATIONS OF MEDIA MATERIAL. HE COUNTER-CHARGED THAT THE INCIDENTS WERE THE WORK OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO IMPEDE THE TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN RULE. EMBASSY OBSERVES THAT ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT GOE HAS DECIDED TO ABANDON ITS GENERALLY ENVIABLE RECORD REGARDING CIVIL LIBERTIES, THE SUSPICION PERSISTS THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE INCIDENTS WERE PERPETRATED BY GOE AGENTS IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC PUBLIC ORDER CHALLENGES. END SUMMARY

2. DURING A TOUR D'HORIZON PRESS CONFERENCE ON NOV. 5, MINGOV BOLIVAR JARRIN ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO A RECENT SPATE OF "TERRORIST" INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE AROUSED CONCERN IN
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PRESS AND SOME POLITICAL CIRCLES. THOSE INCIDENTS INCLUDE:

AN OCT. 19 BOMBING AT THE HOUSE OF RETIRED GEN. MARIO LOPEZ SERRANO, AN OCT. 26 BOMB BLAST AT THE OFFICES OF THE MAGAZINE VISTAZO, AN ATTACK ON THE LEADER OF THE GUAYAQUIL ELECTRIC COMPANY UNION (REF A), THE RIFLING OF FILES AT THE GUAYAQUIL NEWSPAPER EXPRESO ON OCT. 26, THE SEIZURE BY PRESUMED GOE SECURITY FORCES OF DOCUMENTS AND A TAPE AT A TV STATION IN GUAYAQUIL ALSO ON OCT. 26.

3. THE PRESS HAS REPORTED ALL OF THESE INCIDENTS FULLY AND HAS BEGUN TO CRITICIZE THE INABILITY OF THE GOE TO BRING THE PERPETRATORS TO JUSTICE. MEDIA SPECULATION MOST RECENTLY HAS ATTEMPTED TO FIND A TIE BETWEEN ALL OF THESE APPARENTLY UNCONNECTED INCIDENTS. SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE TRIED TO LINK THEM, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, TO THE PROCESS NOW UNDERWAY OF RETURNING THE GOE TO CIVILIAN HANDS. THE COMMUNISTS AND ALLIED POLITICAL AND LABOR GROUPS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE ACCUSED THE GOE OF UNLEASHING A "FASCIST REIGN OF TERROR."

4. IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE MINGOV JARRIN EMPHASIZED THE GOE'S INTENTION OF FINDING AND PROSECUTING THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENTS. HE EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT "PARA-MILITARY FORCES" ATTACHED TO HIS MINISTRY WERE IN ANY WAY INVOLVED AND SAID THAT HE WAS ORDERING AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION TO FIND THE SOURCE OF THAT "MALICIOUS RUMOR." HE SAID THAT THE TERRORIST INCIDENTS WERE EVIDENCE OF THE INTENTION OF "INTERESTED GROUPS TO PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE PATH OF THE PROCESS OF LEGAL RESTRUCTURING NOW UNDERWAY."

5. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY HAS NO EVIDENCE THAT THESE INCIDENTS ARE RELATED. THE TWO MOST RECENT BOMBINGS ARE NEITHER CONSISTENT WITH EACH OTHER, NOR WITH EARLIER BOMBING INCIDENTS (REF B AND C). RANDOM VIOLENCE IS NOT A NEW PHENOMENON ON ECUADOR, AND THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT GOE AGENTS WERE INVOLVED IN ANY OF THE BOMBINGS. HOWEVER, RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE INCIDENTS AT THE TV STATION, AND THAT AT EXPRESO, DESPITE GOE DENIALS, SEEMS TO BE POINTED AT THE POLICE. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT WAS TAKEN FROM EXPRESO, BUT THE TV STATION INCIDENT INVOLVED TAPE AND DOCUMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED BY UNIVERSITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STUDENTS TRYING TO PUBLICIZE THEIR SIDE OF THE CURRENT BUDGET DISPUTE BETWEEN THE GOE AND THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM. THE REASONS FOR THE ATTACK ON EDGAR PONCE OF THE FEDELEC UNION (REF A), AND THE PERPETRATORS OF THAT ATTACK, REMAIN UNKNOWN. THE UNION HAS BLAMED IT ON COMPANY MANAGEMENT, BUT OTHERS HAVE BLAMED IT ON MEMBERS OF GOE SECURITY FORCES DRESSED IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES. AT ANY RATE, WHILE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY CONSISTENT EFFORT BY THE

GOE TO CARRY OUT A REPRESSIVE POLICY, SUSPECTED GOE INVOLVE-
MENT IN SOME OF THESE INCIDENTS MAY SUGGEST SOME GROWING
IMPATIENCE BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT ABOUT RESPECTING
CIVIL LIBERTIES UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

6. NOR DOES MINGOV JARRIN'S ATTEMPT TO PIN THE BLAME ON
GROUPS OPPOSED TO THE GOE'S PLAN TO RETURN POWER TO
CIVILIANS MERIT MUCH CREDENCE. IT APPEARS TO BE BASICALLY
A BARELY-VEILED WARNING TO GROUPS NOT PARTICIPATING IN
THE "RETORNO" PROCESS THAT THE GOE WILL TOLERATE NO SERIOUS
ATTEMPT BY THEM TO OBSTRUCT IT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976QUITO07961
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760419-0804
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761162/aaaacbon.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 QUITO 7805, 76 QUITO 7185, 76 QUITO 6058
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <08 NOV 2004 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <08 NOV 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT ADDRESSES RECENT SPATE OF "TERROR- IST" INCIDENTS IN NOV. 5 PRESS CONFERENCE
TAGS: PINT, PINS, EC, (JARRIN, BOLIVAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006